DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 146 698 EA 010 104

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|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Swent, Boyd; Gmelch, Walter H. |
| TITLE | Stress at the Desk and How to Creatively Cope. OSSC Bulletin Vol. 21, No. 4. |
| INSTITUTION | Oregon School Study Council, Eugene. |
| PUB DATE | Dec 77 |
| NOTE | 51p. |
| AVAILABLE FROM | Oregon School Study Council, 124 College of Education, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon 97403 ($2.00; $1.50 if prepaid; discount of 10% for 10 or more copies) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF-$0.83 HC-$3.50 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | *Adjustment (to Environment); *Administrative Personnel; Conflict; Educational Research; Elementary Secondary Education; *Health; Interpersonal Relationship; Principals; Role Conflict; *School Administration; School Superintendents; *Stress Variables; *Surveys |
| IDENTIFIERS | *Oregon |

ABSTRACT

This report contains the results of a survey of 1,156 Oregon school administrators intended to ascertain what causes them stress and how they cope with it. The first part of the report briefly reviews stress categories, indicating which general areas of administration prove to be the most bothersome. The second investigates specific sources of stress (stressors) and lists the ten most stressful tasks for all administrators, as well as examining why some job assignments are particularly stressful to some administrator groups and not to others. Part three examines the relationship found between stress and the health of Oregon school administrators and lists some of the means of coping with stress named by the respondents. The researchers discovered that the administrators listed complying with state, federal, and organizational rules and policies as the most frequent source of stress, followed by feeling that meetings take up too much time. The researchers call for new methods to teach administrators how to better cope with job-related stress. (Author/DS)

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# OSSC BULLETIN

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## STRESS AT THE DESK

## AND HOW TO CREATIVELY COPE

by

Boyd Swent

and

Walter H. Gmelch

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EA 010 104

## PREFACE

Stress can motivate or delibitate us. It is important that administrators understand the positive and negative consequences of stress in their lives. It is more important for those in positions of responsibility to learn how to cope with the inevitable pressures which impinge on the executives.

This study by Boyd Swent and Walt Gmelch should assist managers to gain a more realistic understanding of and attitude toward stress. Dr. Gmelch is Assistant Director of the Field Training and Service Bureau, College of Education, University of Oregon. Boyd Swent is Assistant Superintendent of the Intermediate Education District serving Washington County near metropolitan Portland.

Sincere appreciation is due to the over 1200 Oregon school administrators who participated in this project and made this study and its findings possible.

Kenneth A. Erickson
Executive Secretary
Oregon School Study Council

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## I. Introduction

The present Bulletin does not propose to review all of the stress-related concepts and ideas. An attempt to provide an overview of the most recent ideas and bring about a greater general awareness of stress and its consequences was forwarded in the May-June OSSC Bulletin (Beyond Stress to Effective Management). This dealt with the general issues of what stress is, how people respond to it, what the sources and physical and psychological consequences are and how people effectively cope.

Two of the key issues previously raised are explored in this Bulletin:

1. What are the causes of stress in school administration? and
2. How can these causes be minimized or eliminated?

These questions do not lend themselves to any quick and easy answers. As an attempt to answer these questions, the authors surveyed Oregon school administrators to "tune in" on what caused their stress and how they coped with it. They present a summary of their research results in hope that by sharing this data with other school administrators everyone will become more aware of what bothers them and work together to help each other alleviate some of the unnecessary stresses of administration.

## II. Penetrating the Stress Cycle

In order to provide the reader with a broader perspective and clearer understanding from which to view stress, the authors would like first to propose a four stage stress cycle. This cycle, identified in Figure 1, begins with a set of demands (Stage I). A meeting is a demand as is a telephone interruption, but whether it produces stress depends on the individual's perception (Stage II). Does s/he have the time or resources (either mentally or physically) to adequately meet the demand? If not and a discrepancy exists [11], the demand is perceived by the individual as a stressor.

It is possible, therefore, for the same demand to be perceived as a stressor to one individual and not to another. For example, if a principal perceives a new change in school board policy as not demanding, a discrepancy will not exist and stress will not occur. However, if another principal perceives this policy change as demanding much time of which s/he has little, a discrepancy exists and stress ensues.

The stress created by this discrepancy results in a stress response (Stage III). It is here that the coping process begins. Individuals go through biochemical changes (adrenal secretion, increased heart rate and so on) which prepare them either to ignore, flee, combat or alleviate the stressor. While the immediate biochemical response is the same for everyone [16], the behavioral and psychological choice to ignore or

combat, flee or alleviate, is very much a personal matter. It largely depends on the resources people have available and what has worked in the past.

The fourth and final stage, consequences, differs from responses because it takes into account the long-range effects of stress, both due to its duration and intensity. If one is not able to alleviate some of the stressors or cope adequately, consequences may arise in the form of serious mental or physical illness. A growing body of evidence is pointing to this conclusion. For example, recent figures from the U. S. National Clearing House for Mental Health Information indicated a $17 billion decrease in the productive capacity of workers resulting from stress: excessive absenteeism -- $5.5 billion, excessive unemployment -- $2.7 billion, inefficiency on the job -- $1.9 billion, and below capacity employment -- $1.9 billion. These figures alone only represent the cost of stress-induced mental dysfunction; as yet no accurate account of the dollars and human capacity lost from psychosomatic and physical ailments are available. However, one in a group of psychosomatic diseases caused by stress, coronary heart disease, accounts for the deaths of over 700,000 Americans a year; 200,000 of whom are under sixty-five years of age.

Information continues to be compiled on the erosion of health due to stress and tension: over 80,000 articles have been written about stress, 1,000 research projects have been done, and every year 6,000 more publications are catalogued under the heading of stress. Based on current writings and research, there is evidence to conclude that: (1) stress exists in the lives of all people and to a greater degree

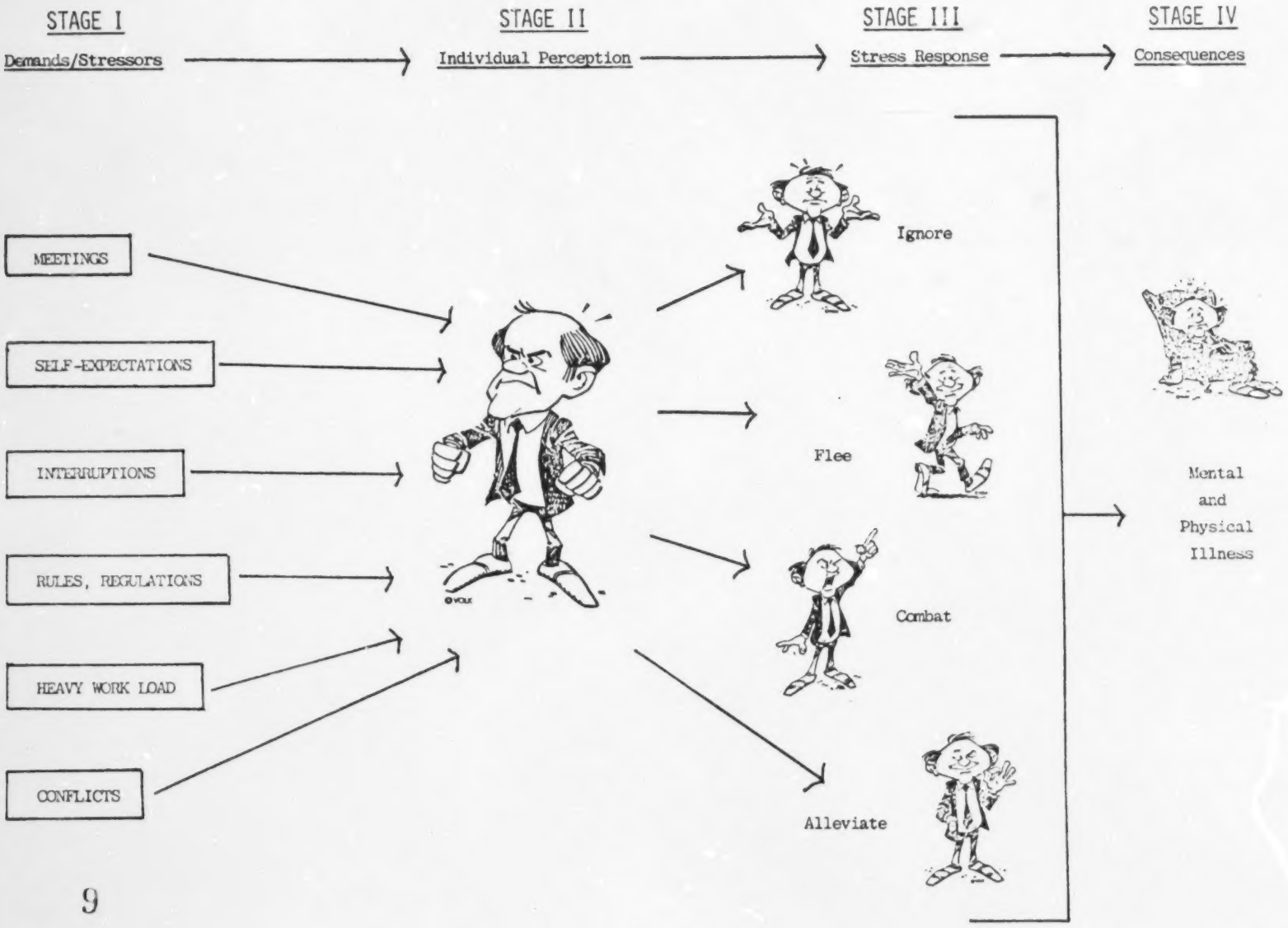
in people who are in people-related positions, (2) the same positions may create different amounts of stress in different people, (3) an individual's health may be negatively affected due to excessive stress or the inability to cope with stress, and (4) little research has been done on the perceptions that educational administrators have on stress related to their jobs.

The authors' concern for their health and the health and managerial effectiveness of their colleagues prompted them to undertake a research project exploring the main sources of on-the-job stresses of school administrators. Their purpose was to share and utilize the new insights in developing a series of general coping strategies aimed at recognizing and reducing executive stresses in education.

It is hoped that the subsequent research findings described in the Bulletin helps to penetrate the stress cycle. Section III attempts to bring more clarity to the first stage of the stress cycle. Demands, henceforth referred to as stressors, are delinated and categorized into five factors or sources of administrative stress. Section IV reports the results of the stress research indicating the top stressors for school administrators and the relationship between stress and health. How Oregon administrators creatively cope with stress is addressed in Section V and the final section suggests five training strategies to aid administrators to deal with their top stressors. For those readers inclined to seek more information about stress and coping techniques, Section VIII's annotated resource guide reviews some of the books the authors have found helpful in their personal search for understanding.

# STRESS CYCLE

*(Figure 1)*



## III. Sources of Administrative Stress

Clear categories of occupational stressors have not been established in the literature. There remains numerous questions as to the relationship between specific stressors and how they should be categorically derived. The categories or factors used in this study were derived by attempting to more clearly delineate, describe and organize the numerous incidences that educational administrators themselves have identified as stressful. However, it must be kept in mind that until further research has been completed, subjectivity in the placement of specific administrative stressors will exist.

The stressors are categorized into five factors with seven items in each factor (Table 1). The five factors are: constraints intrinsic to administration, administrative responsibilities, interpersonal relations, intrapersonal conflict and role expectations. Administrative contraints deals with stressors related to time, meetings, work load and compliance with federal, state and organizational policies. Administrative responsibility relates to tasks characteristic of nearly all administrative positions including supervision, evaluation, negotiations and gaining public support for school programs. Interpersonal relations includes resolving differences between parents and school, between staff members and handling student discipline. Intrapersonal conflict centers around conflicts between performance and one's internal beliefs

Table 1

FACTORS AND STRESSORS

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSTRAINTS

1. Being interrupted frequently by telephone calls.
2. Having my work frequently interrupted by staff members to talk.
3. Writing memos, letters and other communications.
4. Feeling that meetings take up too much time.
5. Feeling that I have too heavy a work load, one that I cannot possibly finish during the normal day.
6. Complying with state, federal, and organizational rules and policies.
7. Trying to complete reports and other paper work on time.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY

1. Supervising and coordinating the tasks of many people.
2. Speaking in front of groups.
3. Preparing and allocating budget resources.
4. Evaluating staff members' performance.
5. Administering the negotiated contract (grievances, interpretations, etc.)
6. Trying to gain public approval and/or financial support for school programs.
7. Being involved in the collective bargaining process.

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

1. Feeling staff members don't understand my goals and expectations.
2. Trying to resolve differences between/among students.
3. Resolving differences with my superiors.
4. Trying to solve parent/school conflicts.
5. Handling student discipline problems.

6. Trying to resolve differences between staff members.

7. Trying to influence my immediate supervisor's actions and decisions that affect me.

INTRAPERSONAL CONFLICTS

1. Feeling that I am not fully qualified to handle my job.

2. Feeling that I can't get information needed to carry out my job properly.

3. Imposing excessively high expectations on myself.

4. Attempting to meet social expectations (housing, clubs, friends, etc.).

5. Having to make decisions that affect the lives of individual people that I know (colleagues, staff members, students, etc.).

6. Feeling that I have too little authority to carry out responsibilities assigned to me.

7. Feeling that the progress on my job is not what it should or could be.

ROLE EXPECTATIONS

1. Being unclear on just what the scope and responsibilities of my job are.

2. Feeling that I have too much responsibility delegated to me by my superior.

3. Feeling I have to participate in school activities outside of the normal working hours at the expense of my personal time.

4. Not knowing what my supervisor thinks of me, or how he/she evaluates my performance.

5. Feeling pressure for better job performance over and above what I think is reasonable.

6. Feeling not enough is expected of me by my superiors.

7. Thinking that I will not be able to satisfy the conflicting demands of those who have authority over me.

and expectations. Role expectations deals with stress caused by a difference in the expectations of self and the various publics with which administrators must deal. These publics include students, parents, colleagues, board of education, supervisors and members of the community.

Subsequent paragraphs serve to clarify and elaborate on each of the five factors.

Constraints Intrinsic to Administration

Constraints intrinsic to the administrative position can be sources of stress to the manager. The administrator's job in education is generally one that does not allow close control over his/her time. Apparently, since school administrators work for the public, they feel they must constantly be available to them.

Administrative work has been characterized as open-ended causing the administrator to feel compelled to perform great amounts of work at an unrelenting pace [12]. The work activities of administrators are also characterized by brevity, variety and fragmentation; allowing the administrator little or no control over his/her time. This is compounded by the administrator's concern for the public's accessibility to school affairs.

The manager's work rest heavily on interaction involving the telephone, scheduled and unscheduled meetings. Personal contacts are continuous. Contacts of this nature influence the administrator's environment, take more time than written communication and thereby hinders the administrator's ability to manage time.

A further constraint results from the time demands created by various rules and regulations imposed by both outside agencies and the organization itself. Organizations outside of the immediate school district, i.e. state departments of education and HEW, require responses to numerous questionaires as well as the development of new administrative systems. In order to comply, new policies and procedures must be implemented and reports completed and filed. To the administrator many of these demands are totally unrelated to his/her immediate educational problems causing him/her to feel the time necessary for compliance to be wasteful and nonproductive.

Several research studies examining these constraints report a direct relationship between poor mental health and excessive and inconvenient hours, unpleasant working conditions and the necessity to work quickly and expend physical effort in meeting deadlines [9]. In a study of 100 young coronary patients, 45 per cent had worked at jobs requiring 60 or more hours per week [14]. Also it has been found that employees under 45 years and working more than 48 hours per week have twice the risk of death from coronary heart disease (CHD) compared with others working less than 40 hours per week. Being bogged down by too many constraints, therefore, has its deletorious consequences on one's health.

Administrative Responsibility

Most public and private sector administrators are responsible for performing the classic management functions of planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating and budgeting. Researching these functions as they apply to educational administrators may be helpful

in explaining their contribution to administrative stress. However, few researchers have attempted to isolate these specific administrative functions as stress producers.

In a related study, it was found that responsibility for people was significantly more likely to lead to coronary heart disease than responsibility for things [17]. Increased responsibility for people suggests that one must spend more time attending meetings and interacting with others. Other studies attest that responsibility for people significantly influences heavy smoking, diastolic blood pressure and serum cholesterol levels [3]. The conclusion: The more an individual has responsibility for people (as opposed to things) the higher are the risks of coronary heart disease.

Interpersonal Relations

Stress from interpersonal relations primarily results from conflict with other people both inside and outside the organization. For school administrators these people include parents, staff, students, community members and superiors.

One of the administrator's main roles is that of disturbance handler [12]. This role deals many times with involuntary situations and changes that are beyond the manager's control. An unforeseen event may precipitate a disturbance or a problem too long ignored may generate a crisis. The administrator must act out of necessity because the pressures brought to bear upon him/her are too great to ignore. Many of the school administrator's interpersonal relations

result, therefore, from his/her role as a disturbance handler. Assistant secondary school principals, for example, indicated conflict situations with teachers, students and parents as the most stressful aspects of their job.

The nature of education and the type of relationships that result represent other sources of stress in the school administrator's life. Education provides a service which deals directly and intimately with people. Since many of the intimate relationships are with youths, and these same youth are their parents most important possessions, parents are naturally concerned with how the school treats them. This leads to an emotional situation as most parent/student/administrator relationships are created out of negative situations. Legally children are required to attend school and parents have no other practical alternative but to send their children to the public school. Thus, the administrator is confronted with a client who is not his/her choice.

Other sources of stress in interpersonal relations result from a variety of barriers that may exist between two or more people. Cultural barriers, generation gaps, differences in frames of reference can generate barriers that lead to interpersonal conflict. Carl Rogers suggests that a major hinderance to effective communication is the tendency to evaluate other's statements and opinions. The inclination to evaluate is usually increased in those situations where feelings and emotions are deeply involved. Thus, the strong feelings that parents, staff members and students have increase the likelihood that interrelationships between the groups will be sources of pressure and stress.

Poor relations can be thought of as those with low trust, low supportiveness and low interest in listening to and trying to deal with problems than confront others [5]. Stress studies have shown that mistrust of others with whom a person works is positively related to psychological strain in the form of low job satisfaction and feelings of threat to one's well being [6,8].

Intrapersonal Conflict

Intrapersonal conflicts represent sources of stress resulting from the conflicting demands between job tasks and individual beliefs or goals. As an example, if a person is a perfectionist, he/she believes his/her work must be withour error. If he/she does not have the skill to perform the task without error, conflict is created.

Lazarus suggests that intrapersonal conflict results from two incompatible motives whose indicated behaviors are contradictory [10]. He further states that once this conflict is recognized, appraisal of threat is inevitable since one or both of the goals or motives is endangered because it is incompatible with the other. The only alternatives are to give up one of the incompatible goals or reduce the threat by self-deception or defense, thus changing the individual's cognition of the situation. The stronger the motives or beliefs, the greater the threat or stress will be on the individual. For instance, the administrator who wishes to be liked by everyone but must dismiss an employee is a perfect example of an individual with two incompatible goals that can create significant amounts of stress.

Role Expectations

Another source of stress for the school administrator results from the beliefs and attitudes about his/her role in the organization. As such, role expectations include preferences about personal characteristics, what the person should do, what kind of person he/she should be, what he/she should think or believe and how he/she should relate to others [8]. Role expectations are not limited to job description connotations but may result from other sources within the organization as well as sources outside of the formal organization such as community expectation of the moral behavior of an administrator.

The various clients the school administrator responds to are shown in Figure 2. The administrator has responsibilities and obligations to each of these client groups [15]. The responsibility ranges from providing information to the community to control and evaluation of the school staff. Again the discrepancy between the role expectations of the various clients and the administrator's own expectations may create varying degrees of stress.

Figure 2

The responsibilities to one client group often require the compromising of responsibilities to another i.e. money spent on athletics may cause a shortage of funds for drama. Each client group often makes its judgment of the correctness of an administrative decision on a limited and biased amount of information. As a result discrepancies exist in role expectations between the administrator and one or more clients or client groups. Thus, the attempt to satisfy responsibilities to each group results in stress on the administrator who is often expected to be all things to all people. As discussed previously, the administrator is again faced with intrapersonal conflict resulting from value judgments on the morality (correctness) of his/her actions.

Related research found that men who lacked clarity about the objectives of their role experienced lower job satisfaction and high job-related tension [8].

## IV. What's Bothering Oregon Administrators

The sample for this study was the membership of the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators. This sample represents 1855 administrators (358 members of the Oregon Association of School Executives, 643 members of the Oregon Association for Secondary School Administrators, 687 members of the Oregon Elementary Principals Association, and 187 members of the Oregon Association of School Supervisors) which is approximately 82 percent of all school administrators in Oregon. One thousand, one hundred and fifty-six administrators responded representing 62.3 percent

of all the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators and approximately 50 percent of all Oregon school administrators.

## Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was composed of 35 job-related situations. These situations had been identified through a literature search and by administrators who had been involved in stress workshops. Administrators were asked to rate (on a five-point scale) the amount that each situation bothered them or to indicate that that specific situation was not applicable to their position. The stressors were also categorized into five factors previously discussed, with each factor having seven stressors. (see table 1, page 6).

In addition to the 35 job-related situations, the questionnaire contained 16 questions related to demographic information about the administrators or their school/district. The sixteenth question was open-ended, asking administrators to identify methods that they had personally found helpful in handling the tensions and pressures of their jobs.

## Results

The results of the Oregon School Administrator Stress Survey are subsequently reported in three separate parts. The first part briefly reviews stress categories, indicating which general area of administration proved to be most bothersome. The second investigates the specific stressors: What were the ten most bothersome tasks for all administrators and were there other job assignments particularly stressful to one or

more administrative groups (e.g. discipline and the junior high vice principal)? The relationship found between stress and the health of Oregon school administrators is reported in the final part.

## Stress Categories

The stressors categorized as "constraints intrinsic to administration" were perceived by the administrators as causing them the most distress. This factor was followed by "administrative responsibility", "interpersonal relations", "intrapersonal conflict" and "role expectations."

When the factors were analyzed according to the position of the administrators, significant differences were discovered in each factor except role expectations. Superintendents were most bothered by the factor of "administrative responsibility" while principals and superintendent-principals ranked highest on "administrative constraints" and "interpersonal relations." All administrators seemed to be equally troubled by intrapersonal conflict. Generally, secondary administrators were more bothered by all stress areas than their elementary counterparts.

## Individual Stressors

Probably more meaningful in developing an awareness of what bothers administrators is the examination of the specific stressor items. The following sub-sections reflect on the most stressful items in addition to others which proved stressful only to administrators in specific positions. Whenever appropriate, significant differences on the items by administrator's position, sex and number of years in administration also are reported to help pinpoint and clarify what ails which administrators.

The top ten stressors identified as most bothersome to administrators

are shown in Table 2. Five of the top ten individual stressors appeared in the "administrative constraint" factor. "Interpersonal relations" and "intrapersonal conflict" each had two of the top ten while the "administrative resonsibility" factor had only one. None of the top stressors were found in the "role expectations" factor.

1. Compliance with rules. All school administrators agreed that their number one source of stress was compliance with state, federal, and organizational rules and policies. However, the degree to which compliance was bothersome varied significantly among the positions with superintendents and superintendent-principals indicating the greatest trouble.

It was also interesting to note that there was a significant difference between the number of years of experience that administrators had and the degree to which they were troubled by complying with policies. The general trend indicated that the longer a person is in administration, the more compliance with rules bothered him/her.

2. Attending meetings. There was also considerable agreement among all administrators that the second most bothersome activity administrators engage in was the burdensome amount of meetings. This was especially true for elementary and secondary school administrators and the central office staff. Although still a high stressor, superintendents ranked meetings only fifth, compared with second for the previously mentioned groups.

3. Completing reports on time. Although the difference between groups was not significant, superintendents were most bothered by

Table 2

MOST STRESSFUL ITEMS

| Rank | Item |
|---|---|
| 1 | Complying with state, federal, and organizational rules and policies. |
| 2 | Feeling that meetings take up too much time. |
| 3 | Trying to complete reports and other paper work on time. |
| 4 | Trying to gain public approval and/or financial support for school programs. |
| 5 | Trying to resolve parent/school conflicts. |
| 6 | Evaluating staff members' performance. |
| 7 | Having to make decisions that affect the lives of individual people that I know (colleagues, staff members, students, etc.). |
| 8 | Feeling that I have too heavy a work load, one that I cannot possibly finish during the normal work day. |
| 9 | Imposing excessively high expectations on myself. |
| 10 | Being interrupted frequently by telephone calls. |

completing paper work and written communications on time. Apparently all levels of administration were bothered by this stressor, which suggests that reports are a perennial problem throughout the school hierarchy.

4. Gaining public support. It was not surprising to find that among the top stressors of Oregon school administrators was gaining public approval and/or financial support for school programs. Given that the major responsibility for gaining public support is actually left with superintendents and assistant superintendents, it was also logical that this stressor caused them more trouble than other administrators.

5. Resolving parent-school conflicts. Secondary school administrators found resolving parent-school conflicts to be highly stressful (ranked third), while superintendents and central office staff seemed less affected by this stressor. It could have been predicted that central office personnel would not have found resolving differences with parents as stressful, since for the most part, they have minimum contact with them.

6. Evaluating staff. Significant differences existed among administrators on the evaluation of staff members. Principals, particularly junior high and high school, were bothered more by evaluation than other groups. Superintendent-principals and elementary principals, although not bothered as much, were bothered much more than superintendents, assistant superintendents, and central office staff. Overall, evaluating staff members' performance ranked as the sixth highest stressor.

7. Decisions affecting colleagues. Those administrators with evaluation and overall supervisory responsibility, primarily superintendents and principals, were most troubled by having to make decisions affecting the lives of their colleagues, staff members, and students. This correlates closely with scores on the previous stressor evaluation, except for those of the superintendents.

8. Heavy work load. Superintendent-principals ranked "feeling that they have too heavy a work load to finish during the normal work day" as their third highest stressor whereas other administrators ranked this stressor anywhere from seventh to twelfth. This supports the proposition that superintendent-principals must be administrators-of-all-trades; not only do they have the normal tasks of superintendent-board relations but they also have the responsibilities for students and parents.

9. High self-expectations. While not ranked consistently as one of the most significant stressors for administrators, imposing excessively high self-expectations ranked ninth overall. It was either the sixth or seventh highest stressor for central office staff, assistant superintendents, and superintendents. Building principals and superintendent-principals seemed to be less troubled with placing high expectations on themselves.

10. Telephone calls. Central office staff and secondary school administrators were more bothered by frequent telephone interruptions than other administrators. The mean scores between groups, however, was not significant. While the scores were not significantly different, the

rank order in which they placed the phone-call stressor was quite divergent: central office staff, fifth; assistant superintendents, sixth; high school vice-principals, seventh; elementary and high school principals, ninth; and junior high principals and vice-principals, tenth and thirteenth, respectively.

The previous ten items were consistently bothersome to school administrators. However, other items were particularly stressful to some administrative positions and not others. Some of those stressors unique to a specific position are discussed below.

Trying to resolve differences between/among students. While only ranked twentieth on the average for all administrators, junior high principals and vice-principals and high school vice-principals were the group's most bothered by this stressor. The differences in ranking between the superintendent (rank 34), for instance, and junior high vice-principal (rank 6), seem to be directly related to the amount of contact with students.

This pattern also holds true for the item "handling student discipline" which was ranked second, fourth and seventh by the junior high vice-principal, high school vice-principal and junior high principal respectively. On the average all administrators gave it a ranking of 12. This supports the general job responsibility pattern of delgating student discipline responsibility to vice-principals.

Participating in school activities outside of normal working hours. High school principals and vice-principals were most bothered by this stressor. Normally, high schools offer the most school activities at night and on the weekends, and therefore, it could be expected that

secondary school administrators would be involved in many outside activities.

Being involved in collective bargaining. Questionnaire results confirm the notion that more stress is generated by collective bargaining among the top level of administrators than among the lower levels of administrators. Superintendents and assistant superintendents ranked it highest among the administrators, third and fourth, respectively. When the collective bargaining stressor was examined in terms of years of administration, the longer a person had been in administration, the more he/she was bothered by collective bargaining.

## Stress and Health

Research conducted during recent years has produced a growing body of evidence that high occupational stress is related to poor employee health. This pattern also emerged from the present study.

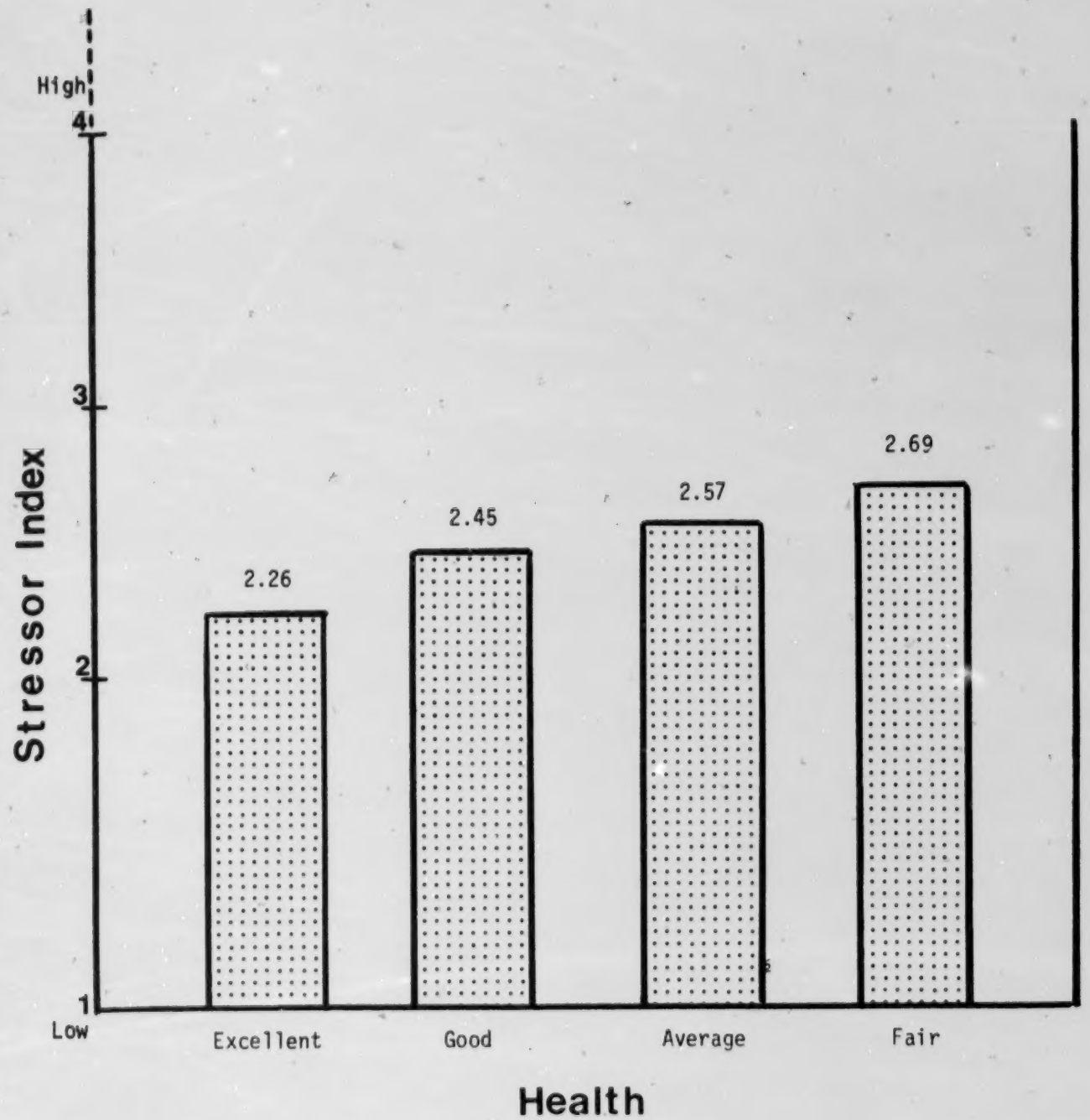
Administrators were asked to rate their health on a self-reporting five-point scale from excellent to poor. Table 3 shows that when health status was compared to the composite score of all stressor items, the level of health decreased as the level of stress increased. This was also true under each of the five categories of stress.

Oregon administrators were also asked to indicate what percentage of total stress in their life resulted from work. The data in Table 4 suggest that six out of every ten administrators felt that 70 percent or more of their total life stress resulted from their jobs. The percentage ranged from 2 percent to 100 percent (In fact thirty-six administrators or 3.4 percent felt that 100 percent of the stress

# EFFECT OF STRESS

# ON HEALTH

(Table 3)

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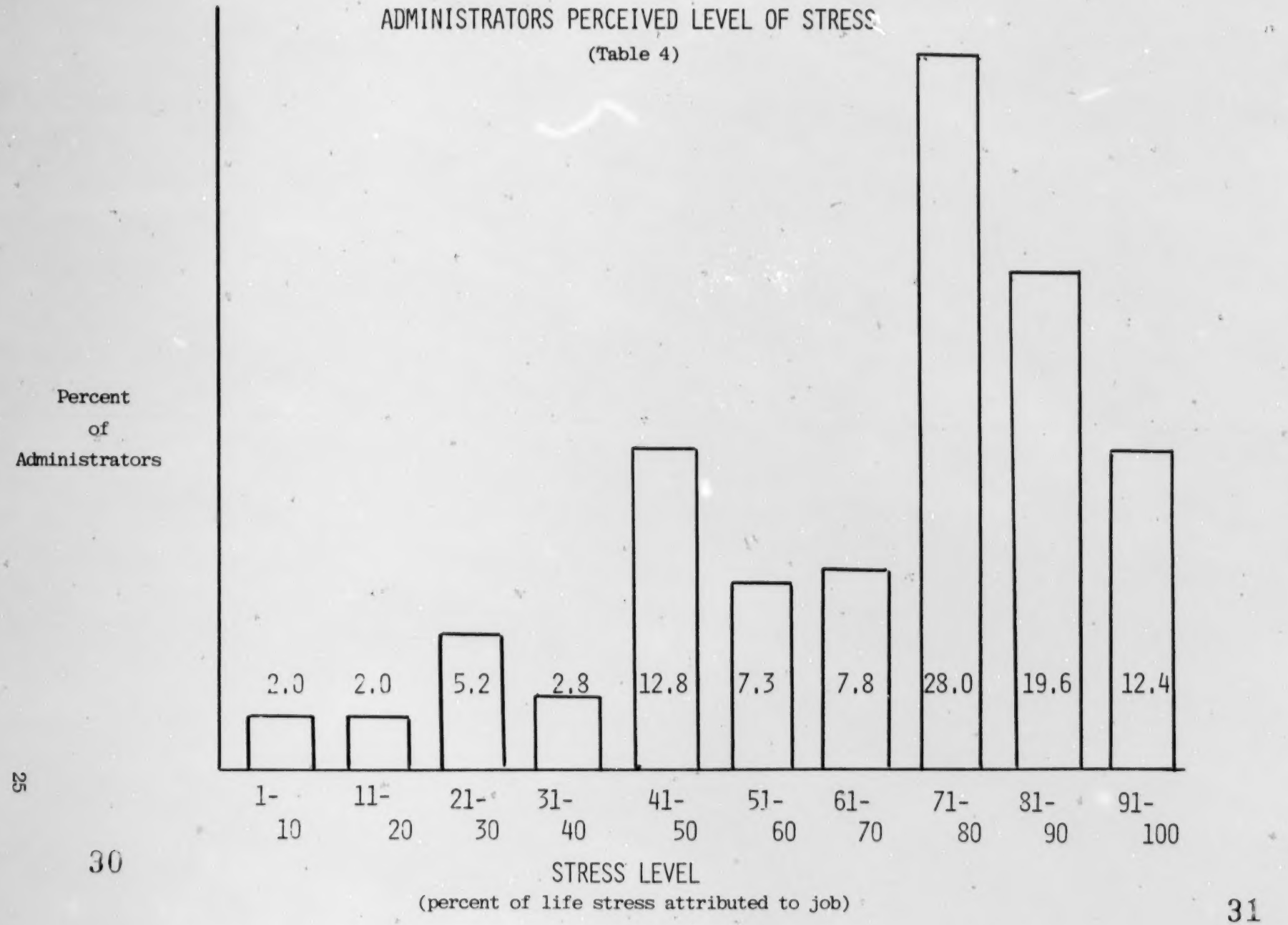
ADMINISTRATORS PERCEIVED LEVEL OF STRESS
(Table 4)
Percent of Administrators
2.0
2.0
5.2
2.8
12.8
7.3
7.8
28.0
19.6
12.4
1-10
11-20
21-30
31-40
41-50
51-60
61-70
71-80
81-90
91-100
STRESS LEVEL
(percent of life stress attributed to job)

resulted from their jobs). On the average, 70 percent of the stress in administrators' lives comes from on-the-job experiences. While we can't affect the 30 percent created by pressures away from the job, assistance should be provided to help administrators create an environment which is less stressful and more healthy. This assertion is the subject of the final sections of the Bulletin.

## V. Coping Techniques Used by Oregon Administrators

The earlier sections of the paper have dealt primarily with situations perceived to be stressful to school administrators. To complete the stress cycle, it is necessary to examine not only those situations creating stress, but techniques or strategies useful in creatively coping with stress.

The majority of the questionnaire concentrated on collecting data about situations that administrators felt caused them stress on their job. However, the final question asked administrators to list those strategies or techniques they had found successful in overcoming stress on their jobs. Approximately 77% of the administrators responded to this question.

In examining their coping strategies it must be remembered, as with stressors, the individual involved is the most important variable. Two general guidelines should be kept in mind when studying coping techniques. First, coping skills or devices are complex and need to be flexible. It would be a gross oversimplification if one were to suggest that any one technique would be successful in all situations. In fact, one needs to

insure that the coping technique itself does not needlessly create additional stress. A rather vivid example of this is the vacation where families hurry to visit relatives and undertake other activities to the point they are exhausted upon return and require several days to recover. Psychiatrists and marriage counselors testify that their busiest month is September, the month after which families have returned from their "restful" vacations. A second guideline to consider is that techniques must be sensitive to individual differences, both culturally and environmentally. If stress is the reaction between an individual's personality and his/her environment, then certainly coping with that stress also closely approximate the same process.

Current literature, along with the responses from Oregon school administrators clearly indicate that different individuals use different strategies. Again, it must be emphasized that one may have to experiment to find the technique that is most appropriate for him/herself.

Although the techniques reported by the administrators are very individualistic, they can be categorized into three general areas: (1) physiological activity, (2) cognitive control and (3) acquisition of interpersonal and management skills. It seems worthy to examine each of these categories in more detail and present a sampling of techniques Oregon administrators use to offset stressful situations.

Physiological Activities

Coping strategies categorized as physiological in nature, are divided into three specific areas. Within the first area are those physiological activities where individuals actually engage in some sort

of physical work or exercise. Typical techniques included jogging, competing in athletic activities, chopping wood, sex, general exercise programs, working on a farm, strolling in the woods, and gardening.

The second area involves activities in which the individual purposely attempts to separate himself/herself from the work environment. Examples in this area included isolating one's self in his/her home, having a retreat in the mountains or another area away from home and travelling for an extended period of time such as a weekend trip to the coast or to the mountains. Another frequent "separation" included establishing social friendships outside the immediate educational environment, thus allowing time to discuss with non-educators topics other than education.

The third specific area included in physiological activities encompasses those techniques specifically designed as relaxation activities. Techniques such as yoga, meditation, hobbies and jogging as a source of positive addiction appeared to be popular.

Cognitive Activities

Cognitive activities relating to positive attitudes and supportive philosophies of life were identified as ways to positively cope with the tensions created by one's job. It was within this category that the widest range of responses occurred. Such responses included the following: approaching all problems with an optomistic attitude, taking time off during the day for quiet meditation, sharing problems with colleagues, spouses and other family members, establishing realistic goals that recognize the limitations of one's self and the impossibility of solving all problems, attempting to keep your emotions out of your work, learning

to know one's self, maintaining a sense of humor, believing in and practicing the Christian ethic and using prayer and the help of God to successfully overcome adversity.

Acquisition of Interpersonal and Management Skills

The coping techniques in this category focused in on developing skills to increase one's effectiveness in his/her job. Vital in this process was to first obtain the best job preparation possible then continually update professional skills. Those skills identified as aiding a stress reduction were time management, conflict management, good personnel practices (i.e. hiring competent people), team management, developing good human relations and effective use of superiors as a resource, subordinates for delegation and colleagues for collaborative problem solving.

Frequency of Coping Strategies

An examination of the number of times the above coping strategies were mentioned uncover some interesting observations. First, more than 50% of the administrators used some sort of physiological technique in coping with their tensions. It is apparent that the use of these activities has been and continues to be an effective technique. One caution however seems appropriate in regard to the misuse of physiological activities. The renowned San Francisco cardiologist, Meyer Friedman suggests that the high stress oriented person (Type A) is in danger of creating more stress in his/her life through participating in competitive activities. Administrators participating in such competitive activities

are strongly advised to do so only after a complete physical by their personal physician.

Responses relating to cognitive attitudes were the second most frequent coping technique. Approximately 40% of the administrators indicated they used some type of mental defense against tension. The authors interpret this in a most positive manner. With the current developments in psychology in mind control, a positive attitude toward one's work and those situations related to work appears to be one of the most effective ways to deal with today's pressures. Albert Ellis' New Rational Guide to Living provides an excellent discussion of negative beliefs which cause great amounts of anxiety and stress in our life [4]. Developing a positive attitude is essential in effective school administration and it is encouraging to note that a large percentage of administrators use such a technique to minimize their tension.

The category of coping strategies dealing with management skills is a rather perplexing one. Compared to the other two strategies, the acquisition of interpersonal-management skills was perceived as much less useful as a technique for coping with stress. As an example, less than 10% of the superintendents listed items relating to interpersonal and management skills. Other administrators placed only slightly more emphasis in this area.

The low utilization of management skills as effective techniques in reducing stress could be due to either one of two reasons: (1) administrators do not recognize these skills as successful methods for dealing with stressful events, or (2) appropriate skills have not been

fully developed to the point they can be of assistance in troublesome situations. In either case the authors believe that the acqusition of interpersonal and management skills can help administrators effectively reduce their stress intake. The comparatively low emphasis on these skills has not changed the authors point of view. Local school districts, professional organizations and administrative certification programs recently have begun to place more emphasis on developing competencies in skill development areas such as conflict management, interpersonal relations and team management. The last section will suggest several training programs aimed at reducing the top ten stressors identified by Oregon administrators.

## VI. Implications for General Coping Strategies

A necessary precursor to managing stress is first recognizing the need to do something about it. Administrators must perceive that a problem exists before they can approach its resolution. Half of the strategy, therefore, is admitting that a potential problem exists and identifying the stress agents. Having done this through self-assessment, checking with colleagues and/or monitoring bodily cues (headaches, stiff neck muscles, etc.), administrators can begin to combat stress.

No amount of research can ever provide THE answer for all administrators. A crucial step, nonetheless, is making the bothersome situations visible by identifying the causes of excessive stress. This stress questionnaire has generally served that purpose.

The second issue raised in this Bulletin centered around appropriate techniques for coping with bothersome situations. There are no simple solutions to the stressors identified in this study. The previous section suggested techniques administrators find useful. In addition this final section outlines several programs of training or self-exploration which administrators should find helpful in developing effective coping strategies.

Five general areas will be discussed; however, no attempt has been made as to the best way to complement the training. Past approaches have been unsystematically delivered through professional associations, workshops, and training institutions. New methods may well be needed to supplement past practices.

Management of Activities

Five of the top ten stressors appeared in the factor concerned with administrative constraints. Four of these five related to the control over time (interruptions, meetings, too heavy a work load, and completing reports). Of the stressors faced by administrators, none seems as pervasive as the stress of time.

Obviously time is finite and more is not available. However, more effective use and control over time can be learned. Odiorne suggests that most successful orgainizations are managed by people that effectively control their activities to achieve the appropriate goals [13]. Through time management training, not only can individual and organizational productivity be increased, but greater success may reduce the stress produced by time pressures.

Compliance with Rules and Policies

Programs to effectively cope with the number one stressor may be the most difficult. Special skills or training may not be appropriate. A better understanding, however, of the procedures involved in compliance would be helpful. Workshops or sessions designed for clarification and understanding should provide some bases for reducing the anxiety resulting from the myriad of federal, state and local controls.

Another aid is a more positive approach to compliance. Past experiences have caused administrators to take a negative or a "why do we have to" approach. This belief increases stress, whereas an approach which suggests how compliance can help or make jobs easier acts as a stress reducer.

Interpersonal Relations

Administration is essentially the art of working with people. Good working relationships, according to several behavioral scientists [1,7], is a significant factor in organizational and individual health. A supervisor who is considerate, for example, serves as a stress reliever for staff members [2].

Therefore, certainly not a new skill, but one that continues to be important in a people-oriented profession is interpersonal relations. Resolving conflict, improving communications, and being able to confront both staff members and parents are needed skills in reducing the stress created by working with the many publics.

Improving Community Relations

Oregon school administrators in recent years have had considerable difficulty obtaining approval for both budgetary and program requests. A variety of reasons contributes to this factor. Several reasons relate to the effectiveness of current educational programs and the improvement of communication with the many publics of education.

The difficulty in obtaining public approval was of great concern to top administrative positions. Perhaps more effort must be placed with the lower levels of administration, teachers and support staff to develop new approaches to community involvement and provide higher visibility to successful school programs.

Realistic Image Building

Neither current administrative preparation nor inservice programs have placed much emphasis on intrapersonal development or training. Past societal and cultural values have emphasized personal strength and perfection and de-emphasized the limitations of individuals and their willingness to accept such limitations. The society of the seventies accepts something less than perfection as a sign of weakness to be avoided at all costs.

Administrators need to learn to accept the fact that administration has its limitations. Changes cannot be made overnight and some changes cannot be made at all. Knowing what can be done in a given amount of time reduces the uncertainty of tasks and the stressfulness of jobs.

Programs that emphasize realistic self-expectations and personal goal setting, life planning and a better understanding of how personal beliefs

influence behavior and performance are necessary and appropriate. A clear understanding of the expectations of certain administrative positions is needed. For example, vice-principals need to know what they will be expected to do, what conflict they will face and the time necessary to supervise the many school activities. (Expectations of grandeur in school administration, although positive and at times profitable, must also be realistic.)

Timing is an important determinant of whether programs for coping are successful or not. The need for the above suggested programs can be categorized into two time periods in the professional development of administrators.

The first period is during "administrator preparation." Present educational administration programs need to be scrutinized to determine where the voids are in program requirements, which thus fail to prepare prospective administrators in handling typical, everyday, stressful situations. For example, administrative certification programs need to place greater emphasis on skills in conflict management, time management, personal development assessment, and how to effectively comply with state and federal regulations.

The second period is "continuous personal and professional development." This area includes techniques or instruction that assist the administrator after he/she is involved in his/her job. Administrators need continuous updating or renewal of management skills or, on occasion, skills to effectively cope with new situations. For example, collective bargaining--a top stressor for superintendents--has not historically been an area of expertise for school administrators.

The above suggested strategies for coping are not meant to resemble new courses in administration, but are rather administrative competencies which could be incorporated or re-emphasized within existing curricula or inservice programs. Ultimately, of course, the implementation of effective coping techniques rest with each administrator.

In conclusion, the purpose of the research presented here was to identify school administrator's perceptions of their stresses on-the-job. Such information should have provided greater insight into the ails of administration; leading ultimately to developing professional growth programs for more effective coping techniques. If administrators were better equipped to deal with the pressures of their job, both their health and the health of their employees and organizations would benefit.

The foremost authority on stress, Hans Selye, points out that despite everything that has been written and said about stress and coping behaviors, there is no ready-made stress formula that will suit everyone [16]. Since people's thresholds and responses are different, the best one can do is to explain the mechanism of stress, unveil its causes, and suggest programs or techniques which may be most helpful in reducing those causes. It is hoped by the authors that this goal has been achieved, thus raising Oregon administrators' level of consciousness so that they can recognize stressors and actively seek ways to cope as/or before stress occurs.

## VII. References


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## ANNOTATED RESOURCE GUIDE

Given the volumes of material published on the subject of stress it is difficult to know what is the best in the field. Following is a review of twenty books the authors found personally and professionally helpful. If you have others you would like to share, OSSC would appreciate hearing about them on the enclosed pre-paid card.

Ardell, Donald D. High Level Wellness. Emmaus, PA: Rodale Press, 1977.

*High Level Wellness represents one of the best resource books available to help people find an alternative to doctors, drugs and diseases. Wellness, as contrasted with illness, is much more than the absence of disease but the reinforcement of health enhancing behaviors in the areas of nutrition, physical fitness, environmental sensitivity, self-responsibility and stress management. Ardell, therefore, does not believe there is a single cause of wellness or illness. He has come to realize that wellness consists of many positive practices which should be used harmoniously. Living up to this theme, the author provides us with a wealth of resource materials from addresses and contacts at Wellness Centers, guidelines for wellness, self-assessment instruments, to an extensive annotated bibliography of major books within each of the five wellness areas. High Level Wellness is a must for those wishing to embark on a multi-faceted and well-balanced attack on stress.*

Benson, Herbert M.D. The Relaxation Response. New York: Avon, 1975.

*Drawing upon modern discoveries and the thoughts of many philosophers and religious theroreticians, Dr. Benson develops a method by which many of us can effectively deal with the pressures of the twentieth century: the Relaxation Response. Based on four elements crucial to any meditative technique (a quiet environment, an objective to concentrate on, a passive attitude and a comfortable position) his technique is one which you can record on your own tape recorder and immediately begin developing your own relaxation response. Prior to developing this technique Benson provides a great deal of information on the physiology of stress, the fight or flight response, the dangers of high blood pressure, and other useful information which he carefully documents. A fairly extensive bibliography on stress management is also provided.*

Dudley, Donald L. and Welke, Elton. How to Survive Being Alive. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1977.

*Much of this book is based on the exploration of stress, disease and*

*the impact of life changes. The authors dispel the ancient distinction between physical diseases and mental diseases. This separate treatment may be, as the authors point out, the single greatest deterrent to quality health care in our country. While the authors spend considerable time elaborating on the complex disease profiles of angina pectoris, myiocardial infarction, vasovagao fainting, ulcerative colitis. . . they do pose an intriguing strategy for coping with stress: avoid the great swings from activity to inactivity by maintaining a steady level of productive activity at work and play. Slowing down and gearing up should be accomplished in mild degrees rather than moving from "the thrill of victory" to the "agony of defeat."*

Friedman, Meyer and Rosenman, Ray. Type A Behavior and Your Heart. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974.

*This best seller, written by two cardiologists from San Francisco, Drs. Meyer Friedman and Ray Rosenman will do more to help people guard against premature coronary heart disease than any other book. If you are in a hurry and can't find time to put this on your "must read" list, then you are exactly the person Friedman and Rosenman are trying to reach. Unlike the traditional approach taken towards coronary heart disease, the authors claim the key lies in one's behavior. Not only do Friedman and Rosenman provide substantial evidence for their Type A/Type B behavior patterns, they also provide the readers with suggestions for diet, exercise, and smoking. A day spent reading Type A Behavior and Your Heart may help you live longer and enjoy life more.*

Funkenstein, Daniel H., King, Stanley H. and Drolette, Margaret. Mastery of Stress. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957.

*Mastery of Stress reports a series of experiments conducted with a group of college men at Harvard University over a period of two years. Although technical in nature, this book elaborates on how people react to certain new and difficult situations. The authors advance the theory that acute emergency reactions represent an innate aspect of the personality (defense mechanisms in the initial stages), whereas the master of stress results from total life experiences (the ability to cope). In seeking and understanding the so-called diseases of stress, they postulate that it is important to study three phases of stress reactions: 1) the acute emergency reaction (fight or flight), 2) the ability to handle stress as time passes (coping mechanisms), and 3) the sustained or chronic stress reaction.*

Glasser, William. Positive Addiction. New York: Harper and Row, 1976.

*Dr. William Glasser, author of Reality Therapy, Schools Without Failure and The Identity Society suggests that we substitute a negative addiction (compulsive eating, drinking, smoking) with a positive one that can strengthen and lead to a more integrated and rewarding life. Chapter*

*Four outlines the six steps needed to become positively addicted: Choose an activity which is 1) non-competitive and can be done in an hour today, 2) is possible to do without a great deal of mental effort, 3) can be done alone without depending upon others to do it, 4) has some physical, mental or spititual value to you, 5) will provide some improvement in your life and 6) can be done without criticizing yourself. Glasser found jogging and meditation to be the most frequently used forms of positive addiction. While the essence of the book lies solely in Chapter Four, other important points about the psychology of personal behavior and keys to its modification are provided in other chapters. Unfortunately, Glasser stretches a good idea into 160 pages; however, the concept, both in theory and practice is definitely worth exploring.*

Gmelch, Walter H. Beyond Stress to Effective Management. Eugene, Oregon: Oregon School Study Council Bulletin, Vol. 20, Nos. 9 and 10, 1977.

*This monograph deals with the subject of stress -- what it is, its sources and causes, the variety of human responses to stress, its consequences, and how to cope with stress. Although the booklet is addressed to school administrators in particular, its prescriptions have value for individuals in all fields and at all levels. It provides checklists to identify one's own sources of stress and provides suggestions from a variety of sources on how to cope with various kinds of stress. The author offers four "stress absorbers" to take the shock out of stress for the school manager: 1) know the limitations of administration (and administrators), 2) establish and update life goals, 3) develop the ability to relax as quickly and completely as possible and 4) develop a "wholistic" approach to stress -- both the mind and body must work together to reduce stress. A checklist to score one's own ability to relax is included, as is a bibliography on stress and related topics. (Annotation provided by Educational Research Service Bulletin, September 1977.)*

Hersey, Paul and Blanchard, Kenneth H. Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972.

*While most books addressing management skills are hardbound, hard to read, and hardly affordable, Management of Organizational Behavior by Hersey and Blanchard is softbound, less expensive and easy reading for administrators not intriqued by jargon-ladened manipulation of theoretical models. The authors provide adequate but not exhaustive coverage of the most prominent behavioral science theories in administration. Concise but not too windy attention is given to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Likert's linking pin, McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y, Argyris' immaturity-maturity theory, Herzberg's motivation-hygiene concept, Blake and Mouton's managerial grid, Reddin's tridimensional leader effectiveness model, Lewin's forced field analysis and other relevant and timely concepts essential in successfully*

*managing people. While Management of Organizational Behavior is not an armchair thriller, it does provide the practitioner with thorough and light coverage of key management concepts crucial to effectively coping with stress.*

Lamott, Kenneth. Escape from Stress. New York: Berkeley Medallion Books, 1974.

*Kenneth Lamott succinctly summarizes some of the major diseases of stress: hypertension, heart attack, cancer, aging, ulcers and other physiological disorders. While speaking to the relationship between stress and disease, he rightfully criticizes people for always looking to science for the cure when the cure is really within ourselves. Disease is not caused by a germ but by a change in our relationship to that germ. Most of his book deals with escaping from stress through letting go with meditation, hypnosis, and biofeedback. Although these meditative devices are helpful mechanisms for coping with stress, readers should be cautioned that this is only one approach and should be balanced with others such as proper nutrition, physical fitness, positive philosophies of life and effective management techniques.*

Mackenzie, R. Alec. The Time Trap. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975.

*We all have exactly the same amount of time, but 90 percent of the managers complain that they never have enough. The Time Trap, a study of time wasters, suggests ways out of the trap. Drawing upon his years of business management experience. Mackenzie shares a number of simple, straightforward and applicable ideas for handling such time and stress traps as procrastination, constant interruptions, the open-door, corridor wanderers, continuous meetings and lack of organization, planning and setting priorities. His book should be read with the idea that it presents a smorgasbord of insightful tips and techniques on how to better manage your time: from his spread of wares you are free to sample techniques which suit your taste. The Time Trap is a book you will want available on your reference shelf to help you cope with the stresses of time.*

McQuade, Walter and Aikman, Ann. Stress. New York: Bantam Books, 1974.

*McQuade and Aikman's well documented book -- prompted by the authors' award winning article in Fortune magazine -- examines what stress can do to your cardiovascular, digestive, skeletal-muscular and immunitive systems and provides insight into how the mind and body handle stress (and how the mind sometimes "betrays" the body!) The final and most substantial portion of the book provides the reader with personal solutions for stress reduction including diet, exercise, psychotherapy, encounter groups, meditation, bio-feedback, drugs and hynotism. While this single book is a necessity, it represents only a beginning.*

*The authors provide a brief list of annotated readings for further investigation.*

Odiorne, George S. Management in the Activity Trap. New York: Harper and Row, 1974.

*The activity trap, Odiorne observes, is a common cause of ineffective change in management. How to avoid and how to get out of this trap is the theme of Odiorne's book. His solution includes: 1) setting worthwhile goals, 2) getting commitment from employees to these goals, 3) accepting responsibility for your own behavior, 4) supporting and assisting subordinates, and 5) relieving workers from goal pressure through rest, vacation and goalless activity. Why do we get caught in the activity trap? Odiorne suggests that people become "so immeshed in activity they lose sight of why they are doing it, and the activity becomes a false goal, an end in itself. Successful leaders never lose sight of their goals, the hoped for outcomes." Odiorne, the genius behind Management by Objectives, employes MBO for breaking out of the activity trap which, as we have seen in the present Bulletin, is a source of much stress in organizations. The moral lies in the fact that if you don't know where you are going, it doesn't make any difference which road you take to get there. Successful leaders keep their eye on their hoped for outcomes for if they aim at nothing, they'll hit it.*

Pelletier, Kenneth R. Mind as Healer, Mind as Slayer. New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1977.

*Dr. Pelletier approaches stress from a wholistic point of view; that is the mind, body and spirit must work together in harmony to prevent stress disorders. Mind as Healer, Mind as Slayer surveys the sources of stress, provides a guideline for the evaluation of stress levels, reports research on profiles of stress-prone personalities and concludes with a practical section on preventing stress-related diseases through meditation, bio-feedback and autogenic training and visualization. As Gay Luce has pointed out, using this book is as important as reading it.*

Selye, Hans. The Stress of Life. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976.

*The Stress of Life, first published in 1956 and revised, expanded and updated with new research findings in 1976, continues to provide a summary of the contemporary scientific basis of the entire stress concept. Selye does not intend this to be a "inspirational book" where readers blindly believe in his statements. His intent is to enable the educated non-medical reader to make up their own minds about the validity of laboratory experiences to everyday problems. The book proceeds from the discovery of stress to the analysis of its mechanism in health and disease; then explores how this knowledge*

*could further our understanding of how to face stress. While Selye's intention is to reach the non-technical reader, his dispursement of highly technical data between the more easily readable and entertaining parts of his narrative makes the book cumbersome to read. For those who are less familiar with many of the stress related concepts and terminology, "Book IV" provides practical implications and applications of stress concepts to everyday life. Selye's suggestions in this part are based upon devising a healthy philosophy of life primarily rooted in "altruistic egoism" which maximizes eustress (good stress) and minimizes bad distress (bad stress) in our lives. Even though technical (glossary of terms provided) The Stress of Life is essential reading for anyone seriously interested in the subject.*

Selye, Hans. Stress Without Distress. New York: Signet Books, 1975.

*"Stress is the spice of life," notes Dr. Hans Selye. In this classic, Selye describes the nature of stress, the tri-phasic general adaption syndrome and what stress is and is not. While using scientific inquiry to base the first portion of his book, the latter chapters philosophically discuss the relationship between stress and "aims in life." His scientific pedigree is impeccable; however, his philosophical thoughts on stress reduction through "altruistic egoism," and "earn my neighbor's love," should be read as critically as the "how to" books by Wayne Dyer, Albert Ellis, Eric Berne and others who have just as much right to forward their philosophical answers to the stresses of life as does Selye.*

Tanner, Odgen. Stress. New York: Time Life Human Behavior Series, 1976.

*One in a number of volumes from the Human Behavior Series of Time Life, Stress pulls together some of the latest findings in stress-related behavioral science research. Written crisply and illustrated graphically, Tanner addresses the pressures of daily life, the impact of crises, how the body responds to stress, and how to work off steam. While not as authoritatively orgainized as other books on stress, it does provide a great deal of information in a pleasurable manner.*

Toffler, Alvin, Future Shock. New York: Random House, 1970.

*If you have not read Future Shock recently, read it again with stress in mind. As Toffler points out, the ability to cope with stress is dependent on how fast one is going. Given a clear grasp of what stress is and a more intelligent control of stress, one can turn crisis into opportunity through numerous coping behaviors. Toffler suggests reducing stress by directly coping (tuning it out or turning it off), crisis counseling, mini or maxi vacations, developing personal stability zones and situational grouping. As Toffler concludes, coping with rapid change, working temporarily*

*in organizations, quickly setting up meaningful relationships -- and then breaking them down -- all augment social strains and psychological tensions; the result, Future Shock.*

Winter, Ruth. Triumph Over Tension. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1976

*Triumph Over Tension resembles many of the pop-psychology pieces we find in bookstores today. However, the author does provide some practical tips for learning to love leisure, how to take a real vacation, exercising for relaxation and developing everyday coping techniques. Although many of the techniques suggested are self-evident, many times we need to be reminded more than instructed. A sampling of these techniques include suggestions to do something for others, arrange for privacy, don't insist on winning, own up to who you are, don't judge yourself sternly, get sufficient sleep, respect your body, change your environment, change your routine, talk to a friend, choose your associates carefully, find your stress level, learn to live for today and seek a sense of humor.*

Wright, H. Beric. Executive Ease and Disease. New York: Halstad Press, 1975.

*If managers believe that work interrupted by sickness is one of those unavoidable things, this book will soon dispel that misconception. Dr. Wright sets out to document the relationship between the organization's environment and the health of its employees. The causes, symptoms and treatment of common mental and physical disorders are clearly explained in Part One. The final part of the book provides guidelines and suggestions for answering many important questions. How does the manager deal with daily pressures and frustrations? What is the effect of frantic travel and sleepless nights? How do women executives cope with their new role in management? Does your work style leave something in reserve for a crisis? How much life stress comes from the home? Are you prepared for retirement? This book explores each of these questions in an effort to bring ease rather than dis-ease into the lives of executives.*

_____. Stress. Chicago: Blue Print for Health/Blue Cross Association, 1974.

*A "freebee" from your local Blue Cross agency, this booklet assembles articles from many noted medical scholars. Not only are the authors knowledgeable on their subjects, but talented at presenting information clearly for the average reader. The articles cover stress at childhood, adolescence and aging as well as stress in the home, on the job and in the environment. The booklet concludes with a chapter on learning how to relax.*